Evans City Public Library

Minor Access, Behavior, and Safety Policy

Developed 7/10/24; Approved 8/1/24

All patrons should feel welcome and comfortable in the library, including minors. For the purposes of this policy, minors are defined as any library patrons under 18 years of age; children are defined as any library patrons under 12 years of age. In accordance with the American Library Association's Library *Bill of Rights*, the denial of equitable and equal access to all library resources and services is strictly prohibited. Failure of staff or volunteers to provide access to library services, materials, and facilities based on patron age will result in disciplinary measures, including but not limited to verbal warnings and formal remedial instructions.

I. Minor Access

Libraries and their governing bodies will ensure parents and guardians have the right to determine their child's—and only their child's— access to library resources and materials. Library staff and volunteers do not act in loco parentis and will not limit accessibility of services or materials based on age. Book or material challenges formally issued by minors will receive the same review process as adult challenges as outlined in the Butler County Federated Library System's Collection Development Policy.

Extenuating circumstances in which equitable access is tantamount include but are not limited to:

1. Homeless youth without a permanent address requesting a library card or access to library services, in which case an in-house library card may be used to check out materials
2. Youth without a legal or permanently "present" adult or guardian, including emancipated youth; youth with guardians experiencing physical or mental disabilities;
3. Youth with physical or mental disabilities engaging in library materials outside of their projected age brackets
4. Youth whose first amendment rights have been threatened by guardians, staff, or other adult patrons

II. Minor Behavior

Minors are expected to engage with the library materials and spaces offered in a responsible and courteous manner; children under 12 are expected to engage within the library in the same manner under adult supervision. Behavior which damages library materials and/or property or which threatens the safety of other patrons is not permitted by any minors.

Prohibited actions for all minors include but are not limited to:

1. Disorderly conduct: misuse of materials, including stacking or throwing furniture or toys; throwing materials at staff or other patrons; fighting, both verbal and physical, with other minors; running; failure to use inside voices.

2. Damaging, altering, stealing, or inappropriately using any library property in or on library grounds, including books, gaming systems, PCs, puzzles and board games, toys, movies, CDs, displays, furniture, animals, and/or any other materials housed in or on library property.
3. Refusing to comply with library staff enforcing policy.
4. Blocking entryways, books returns, restrooms, or other common, accessible areas.
5. Leaving restroom/facilities messy and/or leaving lights and water on.
6. Banging/throwing objects on or at the fish tank.
7. Screaming/yelling at the fishtank or any other animals.
8. Leaving garbage or debris behind after exiting the library for staff to clean up.
9. Leaving books, blocks, or other materials behind after exiting the library for staff to pick up.
10. Entering or using facilities areas or materials designated for library staff use only.
11. Disregarding/disrespecting children section's posted rules.

In the event a minor engages in disruptive or destructive behavior, their designated adult, guardian, or caretaker will be held responsible. Responsibility includes accompaniment of the minor, monitoring of the minor's behavior, ensuring appropriate minor engagement with materials, and financial responsibility for lost or damaged library property or materials used both inside and outside of library facilities.

III. Minor Safety

Library staff and volunteers are not responsible for the safety or wellbeing of any unaccompanied minors beyond the extent expected of a public facility, including:

1. Safety of minors left unattended in different library facilities or grounds areas while guardians use other areas of library facilities
2. Safety of minors without a present guardian

Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult at all times; for the purposes of this policy, an adult includes a guardian, parent, or designated caretaker. In the absence of an adult, children under the age of 12 can be accompanied by a minor 13 years of age or older.

In the event library staff suspect endangerment of a minor by another minor, guardian, parent, or adult, staff reserve the right to contact the police and disclose information relevant to the safety of the minor as mandated by Pa. Code #42.42 issued under the Child Protective Services Law.

Children's areas within library facilities are designated to specific collections, programs, and services designed especially for children's engagement. Any patrons not defined as children or designated as guardians may be required to leave the children's library and instead use other areas of the library if inappropriate language or engagement is perceived.